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The narrative of General
Gage's spies

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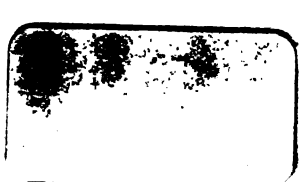

# THE NARRATIVE

OF

# GENERAL GAGE'S SPIES

MARCH, 1775, WITH NOTES

BY

JEROME CARTER HOSMER

BOSTON
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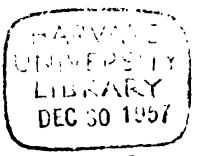


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Tho. Gage

# THE NARRATIVE OF GEN. GAGE'S SPIES,

## WITH BIOGRAPHICAL AND OTHER NOTES

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A PAPER READ BEFORE THE BOSTONIAN SOCIETY, COUNCIL CHAMBER, OLD STATE HOUSE, DECEMBER 8, 1903, BY

JEROME CARTER HOSMER

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ON the afternoon of March 6, 1770 — the day following the "Boston Massacre" — an immense Town-meeting gathered in the old Faneuil Hall; it proved too small to hold the crowd of excited citizens, and they speedily adjourned to the Old South Meeting-house. Governor Hutchinson, looking out from one of the windows of the Council Chamber in the Old State House, — the room where we have met to-day, — watched the thronging multitude as it passed up King street. Describing it, he said, "Their spirit seemed to be as high as was that of their ancestors when they imprisoned Andros, while they were four times as numerous." He had promised to remove the offending regiment, but when

Samuel Adams brought back to him the stern reply of the thousands who crowded the Meeting-house and filled the street between, leaving but scanty room to pass, "Both regiments or none!" — the patriot tells us he "saw the Governor's knees tremble, and his face grow pale," and he "enjoyed the sight."

On the eighteenth of November, 1773, the British Tea-ships were nearing the harbor, and another Town-meeting had assembled. The committee who had been appointed to request the consignees to resign their commissions reported their refusal; whereupon, says Fiske, "the meeting instantly dissolved itself without a word of comment or debate, and at the ominous silence the consignees and the Governor were filled with a vague sense of alarm, as if some storm were brewing whereof none could see the result."* One result made itself manifest on the night of the sixteenth of December following, when the Old South and the adjacent streets were thronged with more than seven thousand people, and fifty "Mohawks" raised the war-whoop on their way to Griffin's wharf to discover the reply to John Rowe's question, "Who knows how tea will mingle with salt water?"

After deliberate acts like these it needed no prophet to discern the advancing shadows of coming events, and both parties began to prepare for the future. By virtue

* "The American Revolution," I: p. 84.

of his office Lord North was the adviser of King George III, but that stubborn monarch, confident in his army and his abundant resources, was really his own Prime Minister. In April, 1774, General Gage displaced Hutchinson, the king believing that with four regiments behind him and the oppressive Port Bill, Boston would submit, and as Lord Mansfield said, "Victory would be won without carnage." But as the weeks went on, Gage's inability to carry out the plans of the British Ministry became more and more evident, and Hume did not hesitate to call him "a luke-warm coward."

The winter of 1774–75 found Gage and his regiments virtually cooped up in the town of Boston. As early as the 5th of the preceding September he had judged it expedient to fortify the "Neck," thus closing the only entrance by land. His troops became impatient at their confinement, and the General felt that he must soon adopt a more active policy to satisfy them and to meet the expectations of the Ministry. That the Province was making military preparations, that the "minute-men" were actively drilling on every village Common, and that abundant munitions of war had been gathered at Concord, Worcester and other towns, he well knew from numerous reports of sympathizers with the Crown in Suffolk, Middlesex and Worcester Counties. In February the Provincial Congress had ordered that supplies sufficient for 15,000 men should be collected and stored at Concord and Worcester — chiefly in the

former town. On the 13th of February the Joint Committees of Safety and Supplies requested Col. Robins to send 15,000 canteens, four brass field pieces and two mortars to Concord, and on the 21st ten tons of lead, and a large supply of balls and cartridges were ordered. All through that and the early part of the following month, tents, provisions, tools, medicines, including twenty hogsheads of rum, as many of molasses, and other necessaries for a vigorous campaign, were coming into that town in wagon-loads.*

Concord was a centre of strong patriotic influence, and the fact that it was the principal point for the assemblage of supplies was by this time no doubt as well known to the Royal Governor as to the Provincial authorities themselves. An armed resistance to the King's troops was evidently a part of their plans, and to forestall these designs it became necessary that the British commander should obtain full and accurate information about the roads and strategic points to the westward of Boston. He therefore issued an order addressed to two of his officers, — Captain Brown of the 52d Regiment, and Ensign D'Berniere† of the 10th Regiment, — under date of February 22, 1775, directing them to go over the roads between Boston and Worcester, observing the topography of the country, noting what provisions and other necessaries the several

* See Shattuck's History, pp. 94–99, for a more detailed account.

† See note at close of this paper.

townships could supply, and report the results of their investigations. When the British evacuated Boston on March 17, 1776, Gage's order and the "Narrative" of the spies, with other documents, were left behind, and fell into the hands of the Provincials; these were printed a few years later,* and with some explanatory notes will form the body of this paper.

Before proceeding it may be proper to say that the story of the expedition of these spies has had a peculiar charm for me, as I am familiar with nearly every mile they journeyed, the inns and houses at which they tarried, and with many of the descendants of the men they mention as having met, — for my ancestors, both paternal and maternal, were Middlesex born and bred for eight generations, and some of them were soldiers in the Revolutionary army from the beginning to the end of the war. Aside from the "Narrative" I have freely availed myself of Sabine's "Loyalists," Shattuck, Hudson, and other authorities, town records, and various town histories.

The expedition of these officers and its object did not escape the knowledge of the patriots, and when Captain

* The original — a pamphlet of twenty pages — is extremely rare; I know of but a single copy in existence to-day, which brought $53 at one of Libby's sales in December, 1910. Besides the "Narrative" it contains an account, from a British point of view, of the Battle of Lexington; but as this is not pertinent to the immediate subject of this paper, it will not be given here; it may be found in full, together with a reprint of the "Narrative," in Collections of the Mass. Hist. Soc., 2d Series, IV: pp. 205 *et seq.* (1816.)

Brown and his companion were sent on March 20 to Concord on a similar errand, they were regarded as suspicious characters, and a woman who had directed them to the house of a Loyalist was threatened with a coat of tar and feathers. Their visit was recognized as proof that that town would probably be the first point of attack, and when a report came a few days later (March 29) that the British were about to occupy it, the Provincial Committee of Safety met at Cambridge and ordered the immediate removal of stores, and these were accordingly scattered in various directions. Shattuck tells us that 50 barrels of beef, 100 of flour, 20 casks of rice, 15 hogsheads of molasses, 10 of rum, 500 candles, 15,000 iron pots, and the 15,000 canteens were sent to Sudbury; the spades, picks, axes, and various other articles, were divided: one-third to be sent to Stow, one-third to Sudbury, and one-third to remain in Concord, and 1,000 iron pots were to be sent to Worcester. It was with the intention of finding and destroying these stores that the "grenadiers and light infantry of the army of Boston" were sent under command of Colonel Smith on their march of the "ever memorable 19th of April." Ensign D'Berniere accompanied his regiment (the 10th) on the expedition, and when Captain Parsons of that regiment was dispatched to secure Concord Bridge, D'Berniere was "ordered to shew him the road there," and also conducted him to a house where the iron cannon and

some of the stores were hidden, as mentioned in the Narrative.

The title-page of the pamphlet is somewhat diffuse, but will be interesting as it mentions each of the several documents printed, and I give it in full: —

GENERAL GAGE'S INSTRUCTIONS, OF 22d FEBRUARY, 1775,

To Captain Brown and Ensign D'Berniere, (of the army under his command) whom he ordered to take a sketch of the roads, passes, heights, &c. from Boston to Worcester, and to make other observations: With a curious Narrative of Occurrences during their mission, wrote by the Ensign. Together with an Account of their doings, in consequence of further Orders and Instructions from General Gage, of the 20th March following, to proceed to Concord, to reconnoitre and find out the state of the provincial magazines; what number of cannon, &c. they have, and in what condition.

Also, an Account of the Transactions of the British troops, from the time they marched out of Boston, on the evening of the 18th, til their confused retreat back, on the ever memorable nineteenth of April, 1775; and a return of their killed, wounded and missing on that auspicious day, as made to Gen. Gage.

[Left in town by a British officer previous to the evacuation of it by the enemy, and now printed for the information and amusement of the curious.]

Boston: Printed, and to be sold, by J. Gill in Court Street. 1779.

The first of these documents printed in the pamphlet is General Gage's Order, which reads as follows: —

BOSTON, *February* 22, 1775.

*Gentlemen,*

YOU will go through the counties of Suffolk and Worcester, taking a sketch of the country as you pass; it is not expected you should make out regular plans and surveys, but mark out the roads and distances from town to town, as also the situation and nature of the country; all passes must be particularly laid down, noticing the length and breadth of them, the entrance in and going out of them, and whether to be avoided by taking other routes.

The rivers also to be sketched out, remarking their breadth and depth and the nature of their banks on both sides, the fords, if any, and the nature of their bottoms, many of which particulars may be learned of the country people.*

You will remark the heights you meet with, whether the ascents are difficult or easy; as also the woods and mountains, with the height and nature of the latter, whether to be got round or easily past over.

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* Even at that late day General Gage had but a faint idea of the deep popular resentment because of his rigid enforcement of the Boston Port Bill, the distress which followed that, and the repeated violations by the British Crown of the chartered rights of the Colonies. The spies learned few "particulars .... of the country people," who suspected their errand from the first.

The nature of the country to be particularly noticed, whether inclosed or open; if the former, what kind of inclosures, and whether the country admits of making roads for troops on the right or left of the main road, or on the sides.

You will notice the situation of the towns and villages, their churches and church-yards, whether they are advantageous spots to take post in, and capable of being made defencible.

If any places strike you as proper for encampments, or appear strong by nature, you will remark them particularly, and give reasons for your opinions.

It would be useful if you could inform yourselves of the necessaries their different counties could supply, such as provisions, forage, straw, &c., the number of cattle, horses, &c. in the several townships.

I am, Gentlemen, your most obedient servant,

THOMAS GAGE.

To Capt. BROWN, 52d regiment,
and Ensign D'BERNIERE 10th
regiment.

(Copy.)

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The next Document was the "Narrative," so-called, which seems to have been D'Berniere's Journal, rather than a formal Report to General Gage.

## NARRATIVE, &c.

THE latter end of February, 1775, Capt. Brown and myself received orders to go through the counties of Suffolk and Worcester, and sketch the roads as we went, for the information of Gen. Gage, as he expected to have occasion to march troops through that country the ensuing Spring.

We sat out from Boston on Thursday, disguised like countrymen, in brown cloaths and reddish handkerchiefs round our necks; at the ferry of Charlestown, we met a sentry of the 52d regiment,* but Capt. Brown's servant, whom we took along with us, bid him not take any notice of us, so that we passed unknown to Charlestown. From that we went to Cambridge, a pretty town, with a college built of brick, the ground is entirely level on which the town stands. We next went to Watertown, and were not suspected. It is a pretty large town for America, but would be looked upon as a village in England; a little out of this town we went into a tavern, a Mr. Brewer's, a whig, we called for dinner, which was brought in by a black woman, at first she was very civil, but afterwards began to eye us very attentively; she then went out and a little after returned, when we observed to her that it was a very fine

* This sentry, it will be noticed, belonged to Capt. Brown's regiment.

country, upon which she answered so it is, and we have got brave fellows to defend it, and if you go up any higher you will find it so. —

[The landlord was Jonathan Brewer, a native of Framingham. In 1770 he bought of Thomas Wellington, Jr., a farm on the line between Waltham and Watertown (the house being in Waltham), where he kept a tavern. He died in 1784. He was distinguished in the French and Indian and Revolutionary Wars, was in command of a company of Rangers in the expedition under Gen. Wolfe against Quebec in 1759, and was Colonel of a regiment at Bunker Hill. I opine that his tavern was a bad stopping-place for British spies.]

This disconcerted us a good deal, and we imagined she knew us from our papers which we took out before her, as the general had told us to pass for surveyors; however we resolved not to sleep there that night, as we had intended, accordingly we paid our bill which amounted to two pounds odd shillings, but it was old tenor. After we had left the house we enquired of John, our servant, what she had said, he told us that she knew Capt. Brown very well, that she had seen him five years before at Boston, and knew him to be an officer, and that she was sure I was one also, and told John that he was a regular — he denied it; but she said she knew our errant was to take a plan of the country; that she had seen the river and road through Charlestown on the paper; she also advised him to tell us not

to go any higher, for if we did we should meet with very bad usage: Upon this we called a council, and agreed that if we went back we should appear very foolish, as we had a great number of enemies in town, because the General had chose to employ us in preference to them; it was absolutely necessary to push on to Worcester, and run all risk rather than go back until we were forced. —

Accordingly we continued our rout and went about six miles further; we met a country fellow driving a team, and a fellow with him whom we suspected to be a deserter; they both seemed very desirous to join company with us and told us, upon our saying we were going towards Worcester, that they were going our way: As we began to suspect something we stopped at a tavern at the sign of the golden-ball, with an intention to get a drink and so proceed; but upon our going in the landlord pleased us so much, as he was not inquisitive, that we resolved to lye there that night; so we ordered some fire to be made in the room we were in, and a little after to get us some coffee; he told us we might have what we pleased, either tea or coffee. We immediately found out with whom we were, and were not a little pleased to find, on some conversation, that he was a friend to government; he told us that he had been very ill-used by them* some time before; but that since he had shewed them that he was not to be

* That is, by the opponents of the Royalists.

bullied, they had left him pretty quiet. — We then asked him for the inns that were on the road between his house and Worcester, he recommended us to two, one at about nine miles from his house, a Mr. Buckminster's and another at Worcester, a namesake of his own, a Mr. Jones.

[The "Golden Ball" was in Weston, and was kept by Isaac Jones, a notorious Tory. He was a son of Col. Elisha Jones of Weston, who died in 1775, aged 66 years. The Colonel was the father of fourteen sons and one daughter; five of the sons were Tories. Mr. Buckminster's tavern was in Framingham, about a quarter of a mile east of the present Centre Village and on the old turnpike from Boston to Worcester. He kept it from 1735 to 1786.]

The second day was very rainy and a kind of frost, with it however we resolved to set off, and accordingly we proceeded to Mr. Buckminster's; we met nothing extraordinary on the road; we passed some time in sketching a pass that lay on our road, and of consequence were very dirty and wet on our arrival: On our entering the house we did not much like the appearance of things; we asked for dinner and they gave us some sausages, we praised every thing exceedingly, which pleased the old woman of the house much; when we told them we intended staying the night, they gave us a room to ourselves, which was what we wanted; after being there sometime we found we were pretty

safe, as by that time we perceived that the coate de pay's* was not a dangerous one; of consequence we felt very happy, and Brown, I, and our man John, made a very hearty supper; for we always treated him as our companion, since our adventure with the black woman. We slept there that night, and the next morning, being a very fine one, we resolved to push on for Worcester, which was about thirty miles from us; we proceeded about nine miles without any thing extraordinary happening, except meeting two men whom we suspected to be deserters. We then dined in the woods on a tongue and some cherry brandy we brought with us, and changed our stockings, which refreshed us much, our feet being very wet.

We then travelled through a very fine country, missed our way and went to Southborough; we were obliged to turn back a mile to get the right road. We then passed through Shrewsbury; all a fine open cultivated country. We came into a pass about four miles from Worcester, where we were obliged to stop to sketch. We arrived at Worcester at five o'clock in the evening, very much fatigued; the people in the town did not take notice of us as we came in, so that we got safe to Mr. Jones's tavern.

[This was Isaac Jones, a relative of the landlord of the Golden Ball in Weston, mentioned above. He was an inn-

* For *côte de pays*, situation. Doubtless a typographic error in the original pamphlet.

holder and trader, and his tavern was a few rods south of the Old South Church. He died in 1813, at the age of 85. In January, 1775, the Whig Convention of Worcester County had denounced him in the following terms: —

*Resolved*, That it be earnestly recommended to all the inhabitants of this County, not to have any commercial connections with Isaac Jones, but to shun his house and person, and to treat him with the contempt he deserves: — and should any persons in this County be so lost to a sense of their duty, after this recommendation, as to have any commercial connections with the said Tory, we do advise the inhabitants of this County to treat such persons with the utmost neglect.]

On our entrance he seemed a little sour, but it wore off by degrees and we found him to be our friend, which made us very happy; we dined and supped without any thing happening out of the common run. The next day being Sunday, we could not think of travelling, as it was contrary to the custom of the country; nor dare we stir out until the evening because of meeting, and no body is allowed to walk the streets during divine service, without being taken up and examined; so that thinking we could not stand the examination so well, we thought it prudent to stay at home, where we wrote and corrected our sketches. The landlord was very attentive to us, and on our asking what he could give us for breakfast, he told us tea or any thing else we chose — that was an open confession what he was; but for fear he might be imprudent, we did not tell him who we

were, tho' we were certain he knew it. In the evening we went round the town and on all the hills that command it, sketched every thing we desired, and returned to the town without being seen.

[When Boston was evacuated by the British, in March, 1776, plans were found for building a fortress on Chandler's Hill, Worcester, together with those for an extensive encampment, which were doubtless drawn by Ensign D'Berniere.]

That evening about eight o'clock the landlord came in and told us there were two gentlemen who wanted to speak with us; we asked him who they were? on which he said we wou'd be safe in their company; we said we did not doubt that, as we hoped that two gentlemen who travelled merely to see the country and stretch our limbs, as we had lately come from sea, could not meet with anything else but civility, when we behaved ourselves properly; he told us he would come in again in a little time, and perhaps we would change our minds, and then left us: — an hour after he returned, and told us the gentlemen were gone, but had begged him to let us know, as they knew us to be officers of the army, that all their friends of government at Petersham were disarmed by the rebels, and that they threatened to do the same at Worcester in a very little time; he sat and talked politicks, and drank a bottle of wine with us — and also told us that none but a few friends to government knew we were in town; we said it was very in-

different to us whether they did or not, tho' we thought very differently; however, as we imagined we had staid long enough in that town, we resolved to set off at day-break the next morning and get to Framingham; accordingly off we set, after getting some roast beef and brandy from our landlord, which was very necessary on a long march, and prevented us going into houses where perhaps they might be too inquisitive; we took a road we had not come, and that led us to the pass four miles from Worcester; we went on unobserved by any one until we passed Shrewsbury, where we were overtaken by a horseman who examined us very attentively, and especially me, whom he looked at from head to foot as if he wanted to know me again; after he had taken his observations he rode off pretty hard and took the Marlborough road, but by good luck we took the Framingham road again to be more perfect in it, as we thought it would be the one made use of.

[This man on horseback was Captain Timothy Bigelow, a blacksmith of Worcester, sent by the Committee of Correspondence of that town to observe these strangers, whose martial bearing, notwithstanding their caution, betrayed them. Bigelow communicated their probable visit to the people of Marlborough, where they were expected that night. He was a member of the Provincial Congress in 1774–75, and Captain of the Minute-men. He was in Arnold's expedition to Quebec, where he was taken prisoner; he was a commander of Continental troops, and served

throughout the Revolutionary war. Hon. Alfred S. Roe, writing of Col. Bigelow in the "New England Magazine" for January, 1901, says: — "On hearing of the march of the British to Lexington and Concord, on the 19th of April, 1775, he marched with his company of Minute-men to the scenes whence swept that 'next breeze from the North,' foretold by Patrick Henry: Capt. Benjamin Flagg followed with his company; in all 110 men left Worcester on that day." On April 19, 1861, when the Middlesex soldiers were marching through Baltimore, a marble monument was dedicated in Worcester to the memory of Captain Bigelow, on which appears the following inscription: —" Col. Timothy Bigelow, Born Aug. 12, 1739. Died Mar. 31, 1790; 15th Regt. Mass. Continentals — Quebec — Monmouth — Saratoga — Verplank's Point — Valley Forge — Yorktown." It stands on the old Common, in the rear of the new City Hall.]

We arrived at Buckminster's tavern about six o'clock that evening, the company of militia were exercising near the house, and an hour after they came and performed their feats before the windows of the room we were in; we did not feel very easy at seeing such a number so very near us; however, they did not know who we were, and took little or no notice of us. — After they had done their exercise, one of their commanders spoke a very eloquent speech, recommending patience, coolness and bravery, (which indeed they much wanted) particularly told them they would always conquer if they did not break, and recommended them to charge us

cooly, and wait for our fire, and every thing would succeed with them — quotes Cæsar and Pompey, brigadiers Putnam and Ward,* and all such great men; put them in mind of Cape Breton, and all the battles they had gained for his majesty in the last war, and observed that the regulars must have been ruined but for them. — After so learned and spirited an harangue, he dismissed the parade, and the whole company came into the house and drank until nine o'clock, and then returned to their respective homes full of pot-valour. We slept there that night and no-body in the house suspected us.

[This tavern was another rather risky place for the British spies. It was kept for years by Colonel Joseph Buckminster, Jr., born 1697, died 1780, who had frequently been a member of the Colonial legislature, Colonel of the Framingham militia, and held responsible positions in the French and Indian war and at the opening of the Revolution, when he was Lieutenant-colonel of Jonathan Brewer's regiment, and was dangerously wounded at Bunker Hill. The militia company mentioned by D'Berniere was either that of Capt. Simon Edgell, 70 men (in which my great-grandfather, William Maynard, was a sergeant), Capt. Micajah Gleason, 60 men, or Capt. Jesse Eames, 24 men. They were enlisted under the authority of an Act passed by the Provincial Congress Oct. 25, 1774, and were organized Dec. 2, of that year. Each man was required to provide himself with a musket,

* Gen. Israel Putnam and Gen. Artemas Ward; the latter was the commander of the Provincial troops besieging Boston until the arrival of Gen. Washington.

bayonet, cartridge-box, and thirty-six rounds of ammunition. They met for drill as often as once a week. They all responded to the Lexington alarm, and reached Concord about noon, too late for the fight there, but soon enough for the Merriam's corner assault, and the attack in the Lincoln woods. They joined in the pursuit until the British reached Cambridge. The service of these men was from four to twenty-eight days. Out of a total population of 1500, Framingham sent 153 of her sons into the Lexington fight, from which it would appear that the criticism of D'Berniere on the "pot-valour" of the men he watched while drilling was not justified by the event.]

Next morning we set off for Weston, had a very agreeable day, having fine weather and a beautiful country to travel through; we met nothing extraordinary on the road; no-body knew us, and we were asked very few questions: On our arrival at Mr. Jones's, we met with a very welcome reception, he being our friend; we received several hints from the family not to attempt to go any more into the country; but as we had succeeded so well heretofore, we were resolved to go the Sudbury road, (which was the main road that led to Worcester) and go as far as the thirty-seven mile-stone, where we had left the main road and taken the Framingham road. We slept at Jones's that night, and got all our sketches together and sent them to Boston with our man, so that if they did stop and search us, they would not get our papers.

The next day was very cloudy and threatened bad weather, towards twelve o'clock it snowed; we dined soon in hopes the weather would clear up. — At two o'clock it ceased snowing a little, and we resolved to set off for Marlborough, which was about sixteen miles off; we found the roads very bad, every step up to our ankles; we passed through Sudbury, a very large village, near a mile long, the causeway lies across a great swamp, or overflowing of the river Sudbury, and commanded by a high ground on the opposite side; nobody took the least notice of us until we arrived within three miles of Marlborough, (it was snowing hard all the while) when a horseman overtook us and asked us from whence we came, we said from Weston, he asked if we lived there, we said no; he then asked where we resided, and as we found there was no evading his questions, we told him we lived at Boston; he then asked us where we were going, we told him to Marlborough, to see a friend, (as we intended to go to Mr. Barnes's, a gentleman to whom we were recommended, and a friend to government;) he then asked if we were in the army, we said not, but were a good deal alarmed at his asking us that question; he asked several rather impertinent questions, and then rode on for Marlborough, as we suppose, to give them intelligence there of our coming, — for on our entering the town, the people came out of their houses (tho' it snowed and blew very hard) to look at us, in particular a baker asked Capt. Brown where

are you going master, he answered on to see Mr. Barnes. —

We proceeded to Mr. Barnes's, and on our beginning to make an apology for taking the liberty to make use of his house and discovering to him that we were officers in disguise, he told us we need not be at the pains of telling him, that he knew our situation, that we were very well known (he was afraid) by the town's people.— We begged he would recommend some tavern where we should be safe, he told us we could be safe no where but in his house; that the town was very violent, and that we had been expected at Col. Williams's the night before, where there had gone a party of liberty people to meet us, — (we suspected, and indeed had every reason to believe, that the horseman that met us and took such particular notice of me, the morning we left Worcester, was the man who told them we should be at Marlborough the night before, but our taking the Framingham road when he had passed us, deceived him ;) — Whilst we were talking, the people were gathering in little groups in every part of the town. — Mr. Barnes asked us who had spoke to us on our coming into the town, we told him a baker; he seemed a little startled at that, told us he was a very mischievous fellow, and that there was a deserter at his house; Capt. Brown asked the man's name, he said it was Swain, that he had been a drummer; Brown knew him too well, as he was a man of his own company, and had not been

gone above a month — so we found we were discovered. — We asked Mr. Barnes if they did get us into their hands, what they would do with us; he did not seem to like to answer; we asked him again, he then said we knew the people very well, that we might expect the worst of treatment from them.—

Immediately after this, Mr. Barnes was called out; he returned a little after and told us the doctor of the town had come to tell him he was come to sup with him — (now this fellow had not been within Mr. Barnes's doors for two years before, and came now for no other business than to see and betray us) — Barnes told him he had company and could not have the pleasure of attending him that night; upon this the fellow stared about the house and asked one of Mr. Barnes's children who her father had got with him, the child innocently answered that she had asked her pappa, but he told her it was not her business; he then went, I suppose to tell the rest of his crew. —

[This Doctor was Samuel Curtis. When Dr. Dexter died, in 1769, his widow took Dr. Curtis into her family as a physician, to succeed to her late husband's practice, and they were married in 1771. Dr. Curtis was a man of influence in the town, holding the offices of Selectman, Town-clerk, etc.; he was a justice of the peace, and a member of the Committee of Correspondence. He came to Marlborough from Roxbury.]

When we found we were in that situation, we resolved to lie down for two or three hours, and set off at twelve o'clock at night; so we got some supper on the table and were just beginning to eat, when Barnes (who had been making enquiry of his servants) found they intended to attack us, and then he told us plainly he was very uneasy for us, that we could be no longer in safety in that town; upon which we resolved to set off immediately, and asked Mr. Barnes if there was no road round the town, so that we might not be seen; he took us out of his house by the stables, and directed us a bye road which was to lead us a quarter of a mile from the town, it snowed and blew as much as ever I see it in my life; however, we walked pretty fast, fearing we should be pursued; at first we felt much fatigued, having not been more than twenty minutes at Mr. Barnes's to refresh ourselves, and the roads (if possible) were worse than when we came; but in a little time after it wore off, and we got without being perceived, as far as the hills that command the causeway at Sudbury, and went into a little wood where we eat a bit of bread that we took from Mr. Barnes's and eat a little snow to wash it down.

[Henry Barnes, the Loyalist, went from Boston to Marlborough in 1753. He was in no wise connected with the several families of the name in the latter town, who were all staunch patriots. As early as 1770 he was condemned by the towns-people as an importer who brought goods into the

country contrary to the agreement of the patriotic merchants of Boston and its vicinity. He was a man of some note, a favorite of the Royal Governor, who in 1766 appointed him one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the County of Middlesex. He is styled an "Importer" in the Marlborough Resolutions. He kept a store there, and appears to have been a man of wealth and enterprise. In 1753 he presented a petition to Governor Shirley, in which he sets forth that he has lately been at considerable expense and trouble in erecting in Marlborough a commodious house, works, and utensils for the distilling and manufacturing of cider spirits, and the same has answered his expectations, so that besides what has been consumed in the Province, he has distilled the same spirit and sent to Boston for exportation between two and three thousand gallons, and the same is esteemed by proper judges to be as good and wholesome as any spirit now used; and he prays that he may be licensed to retail it in small quantities. Whereupon the Court of Sessions and the Selectmen of the town were empowered to grant him such a license.

He resided in the east village, in the house known as the Cogswell house, which he built in 1763. This house is still standing and is in a good state of preservation. He was one of the largest tax-payers, and was the owner of several slaves, one of whom, "Daphne," was supported out of his estate after he had left Marlborough (which was not very long after the brief visit of the spies) to espouse the Royal cause. He took refuge in Boston, under the protection of the King's troops, and at the outbreak of the Revolution was a bitter Tory. An Act was passed in 1778 by which

all persons who had left the State and gone over to the enemy were forbidden to return to their former homes, and it also provided that should any such return they were to be arrested and sent out of the dominion of the United States; and in case they should again return without the leave of the General Court after such transportation, they should suffer the pains of death without benefit of clergy. In this Act Henry Barnes is expressly mentioned. His property was confiscated; he was in England with his family in 1777, and died in London in 1808, at the age of 84.] *

After that we proceeded about one hundred yards, when a man came out of a house and said those words to Capt. Brown, "What do you think will become of you now," which startled us a good deal, thinking we were betrayed.— We resolved to push on at all hazards, but expected to be attacked on the causeway; however we met nobody there, so began to think it was resolved to stop us in Sudbury, which town we entered when we passed the causeway; about a quarter of a mile in the town we met three or four horsemen, from whom we expected a few shot, when we came nigh they opened to the right and left and quite crossed the road, however they let us pass through them without taking any notice, their opening being only chance; but our apprehensions made us interpret every thing against us.— At last we arrived at our friend Jones's again, very much fatigued,

* See Sabine's "Loyalists," and Hudson's "History of Marlborough."

after walking thirty-two miles between two o'clock and half-after ten at night, through a road that every step we sunk up to the ankles, and it blowing and drifting snow all the way. — Jones said he was glad to see us back, as he was sure we should meet with ill-usage in that part of the country, as they had been watching for us sometime; but said he found we were so deaf to his hints, that he did not like to say any thing for fear we should have taken it ill; we drank a bottle of mulled Madeira wine, which refreshed us very much, and went to bed and slept as sound as men could do, that were very much fatigued.

The next morning, after breakfast, we set off for Boston. Jones shewed us a road that took us a quarter of a mile below Watertown bridge, as we did not choose to go through that town. We arrived at Boston about twelve o'clock, and met General Gage and General Haldiman,* with their aid-de-camps, walking out on the neck, they did not know us until we discovered ourselves; we besides met several officers of our acquaintance who did not know us.

A few days after our return, Mr. Barnes came to town from Marlborough, and told us, immediately on our quitting the town, the committee of correspondence came to his house and demanded us; he told them we

* This is the General interviewed by the boys of the Public Latin School, who complained that his soldiers had spoiled their coast; the story is often, but erroneously, attributed to Gen. Gage.

were gone; they then searched his house from top to bottom, looked under the beds and in their cellars, and when they found we were gone, they told him if they had caught us in his house, they would have pulled it about his ears. — They then sent horsemen after us, every road; but as we had the start of them, and the weather being so very bad, they either did not overtake us, or missed us. Mr. Barnes told them we were not officers, but relations of his wife's, from Penobscot, and were going to Lancaster; that, perhaps, might have deceived them.

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This completes the story of the perilous adventures of the spies, but General Gage seems to have felt it necessary to know more about the military stores accumulated at Concord, — their previous expedition having taken them south of that town, — and two or three weeks after the return of Captain Brown and his companion, he despatched them thither on a similar errand. From the account of their experiences there, and later on the nineteenth of April, which is the next document in the pamphlet, it would seem that they were successful in locating some of the hiding-places of the supplies which had been sent there.

*Account of the proceedings of the aforesaid officers, in consequence of further orders and instructions from General Gage, of the 20th March following: with occurrences during their mission.*

THE twentieth of March Captain Brown and myself received orders to set out for Concord, and examine the road and situation of the town; and also to get what information we could relative to what quantity of artillery and provisions. We went through Roxbury and Brookline, and came to the main road between the thirteen and fourteen mile-stones, in the township of Weston; we went through part of the pass at the eleven mile-stone, took the Concord road, which is seven miles from the main road. We arrived there without any kind of insult being offered to us; the road is high to the right and low to the left, woody in most places, and very close and commanded by hills frequently. The town of Concord lies between hills that command it entirely; there is a river runs through it, with two bridges over it; in summer it is pretty dry; the town is large and covers a great tract of ground, but the houses are not close together but generally in little groups. We were informed that they had fourteen pieces of cannon (ten iron and four brass) and two

cohorns;* they were mounted but in so bad a manner that they could not elevate them more than they were, that is, they were fixed to one elevation; their iron cannon they kept in a house in town, their brass they had concealed in some place behind the town, in a wood. They had also a store of flour, fish, salt and rice; and a magazine of powder and cartridges. They fired their morning gun, and mounted a guard of ten men at night. We dined at the house of a Mr. Bliss, a friend to government; they had sent him word they would not let him go out of town alive that morning; however, we told him if he would come with us we would take care of him, as we were three and all well armed, — he consented and told us he could shew us another road, called the Lexington road.

[From Sabine's "Loyalists" we learn that this was Daniel Bliss, a son of the Rev. Samuel Bliss of Concord, and he was probably the source of the information gained by the spies in that town. He was born in 1740; graduated at Harvard in 1760, and died at Lincoln, near Fredericton, in

* Doubtless these four brass cannon and the two cohorns or mortars were those ordered to be sent to Concord by the Joint Committee of Safety and Supplies on the thirteenth of the previous month, as mentioned on p. 66 *supra*. From his minute description of their condition, and the fact already mentioned that he was able to conduct Captain Parsons to the house where they were concealed, we might almost be justified in supposing that D'Berniere personally saw them. However that may be, the success of the spies in obtaining these particulars and getting safely away without discovery, shows that the king had still some loyal supporters even in Concord.

the Province of New Brunswick, in 1806. He was one of the attorneys and barristers who were Addressors of Governor Hutchinson in 1774, and was proscribed under the Act of 1778. He joined the British army and was appointed Commissary. After the Revolution he settled in New Brunswick, where he became a member of the Council, and Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas. His widow died in 1807, at the age of sixty. D'Berniere gives no clue to the identity of the third member of their party, but very likely it was the servant of Capt. Brown, who accompanied them on their previous expedition.]

We set out and crossed the bridge in the town, and of consequence left the town on the contrary side of the river to what we entered it. The road continued very open and good for six miles, the next five a little inclosed, (there is one very bad place in these five miles) the road good to Lexington. You then come to Menotomy, the road still good; a pond or lake at Menotomy. You then leave Cambridge on your right, and fall into the main road a little below Cambridge, and so to Charlestown; the road is very good almost all the way.

In the town of Concord, a woman directed us to Mr. Bliss's house; a little after she came in crying, and told us they swore if she did not leave the town, they would tar and feather her for directing Tories in their road.

The remaining portion of the original pamphlet from which I have quoted is devoted to an interesting account of the destruction of the Provincial stores at Concord by the British troops, after their march thither (as mentioned above), and their subsequent retreat to Charlestown, where they arrived about seven o'clock in the evening, hotly pursued by the patriots to the very end of the day.

The Tories were never in the ascendancy in Massachusetts; Boston and its immediate vicinity had the large majority of the "friends of government." After Lexington and Bunker Hill the country towns had but little trouble with them, and when on the ever memorable seventeenth of March, 1776, the forces of George III, with nine hundred sympathizers, celebrated St. Patrick's day by evacuating the rebellious town to embark for Halifax, the control of Great Britain over Massachusetts departed forever.

# NOTES.

SOME biographical notes on the persons mentioned in the preceding "Narrative," in addition to those already given, may be of interest. General Sir Thomas Gage, the last of the Royal Governors of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, by whose order the spies made their reconnaissance, was born in 1721; he was the second son of the first Viscount Gage, and one of his own sons inherited the title. While serving under Lord Amherst, shortly after Braddock's defeat, he married Margaret, daughter of the Hon. Peter Kemble, President of the Council of New Jersey. He died in England in April, 1787.* The portrait herewith is from an original given to General W. H. Sumner (who married a niece of General Gage) by Admiral Sir William Hall Gage, a son of the General, who considered it an excellent likeness of his father. This portrait was bequeathed to the Commonwealth by General Sumner, and now hangs in the State House. The autograph is a photographic copy of an original in the collections of the Bostonian Society.

At the age of twenty-four, General Gage was an officer in the "Guards," and served as an aide to the Duke of Cumberland in the battle of Fontenoy, 1745, and again in the same capacity at

* This is the date given by General Sumner, and agrees with Allen, Appleton, Lossing and other authorities, though Drake in his "History of Boston," p. 750, has April 2, 1788. See Sumner's "History of East Boston," p. 366.

Culloden in 1746. He was a Lieutenant-Colonel under General Braddock in 1755, and severely wounded in the ill-fated expedition of that unfortunate officer, during which he made the acquaintance of Washington, who, twenty years after, was to drive him out of Boston. Later he was ordered to Canada, where by his capture of Montreal and the completion of the conquest, he brought matters to such a successful conclusion that he was made a Major-General and Governor of Upper Canada. In 1763 the King appointed him Commander-in-chief of the British forces in North America, having his head-quarters in New York until 1772. His services there were so satisfactory that he was again promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-General, and when the troubles in Massachusetts became more and more threatening, he was regarded as the best qualified to hold the office of Governor of that Province and Captain-General, in addition to his other arduous duties.

He had already made a favorable impression on the people of Boston. When, in October, 1768, Colonel Dalrymple and Governor Bernard applied to the town authorities for quarters for the two regiments of royal troops just landed, the officials sturdily denied the right of the King to require that service without their consent while there was room at Castle William, and refused the request. General Gage came on from New York to investigate the matter, and when he read the Act of Parliament on which Samuel Adams and the citizens relied, as justifying their refusal, he promptly declined to enforce the demand. His tactful course, and especially his order for the return of the two regiments to Halifax as needless, disarmed, for the time at least, his opponents.

When he arrived in Boston on May 13, 1774, to succeed Governor Hutchinson, there was not a British soldier in the town, though one small regiment and two companies of artillery were

in garrison at the Castle. His guard of honor, as he passed up King Street from Long Wharf to the Old State House, where he was proclaimed Governor, was the Independent company of Cadets, then under command of John Hancock as Lieutenant-Colonel (the Governor being *ex officio* honorary Colonel of the corps). He was then escorted to the Province House, and as he passed through the lines on entering, he observed, says General Sumner, "that the customary salute was not given. He sent for Colonel Hancock, and demanded an explanation of the omission. The Colonel's reply that it was through forgetfulness, and that no disrespect was intended, did not satisfy the Governor, who deprived him of his commission..... This broke up the company, and it remained disorganized until 1787, when through the influence of General Brooks .... the Legislature reorganized it." *

The story of subsequent events, and the loss of the favorable regard in which he had been held, which followed so rapidly, need not be repeated here; but it should be said that the researches of modern historians, and the publication of contemporary letters and documents from the Dartmouth and Sackville Collections, printed for the first time in Colonel Fisher's elaborate discussion in the "Proceedings of the Bunker Hill Monument Association" (1907), have shed a more favorable light on the character and capacity of General Gage, and corroborate the truth of Lord Chatham's vigorous defence of his conduct, when on December 22, 1774, that eminent statesman introduced a Resolution in the House of Lords, directing the withdrawal of the British troops from Boston. Evidently the execution of the orders of his superior officers was often as repugnant to Gage as it was to the Provincials.

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* Sumner's "History of East Boston," p. 365.

Major-General Sir Frederick Haldimand, who was walking with General Gage near the fortifications on the "Neck," where those officers met the spies returning from their first expedition, was Gage's second in command. In 1778 he succeeded Sir Guy Carleton as Governor and Commander-in-chief of Canada.

Of Ensign Henry De Berniere (whose name is erroneously spelled D'Bernicre throughout the original pamphlet, which has been carefully followed in spelling, punctuation, etc.), Colonel Fisher tells us "he was an exceptionally capable topographical engineer, judging from his reports to Gage .... and by his map of the Bunker Hill battle, which is a master-piece of military topography..... This map, discovered and published in 1818, is by far the best map we have by a participant in the battle." It was under his guidance that the British landed at Lechmere's Point on the night of April 18, crossed the road to Charlestown, and proceeded along the western foot of Prospect Hill to the main road from Cambridge to Lexington, then called "Charlestown Lane," which was the route that De Berniere had taken when returning from his reconnaissance of March 20.

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